

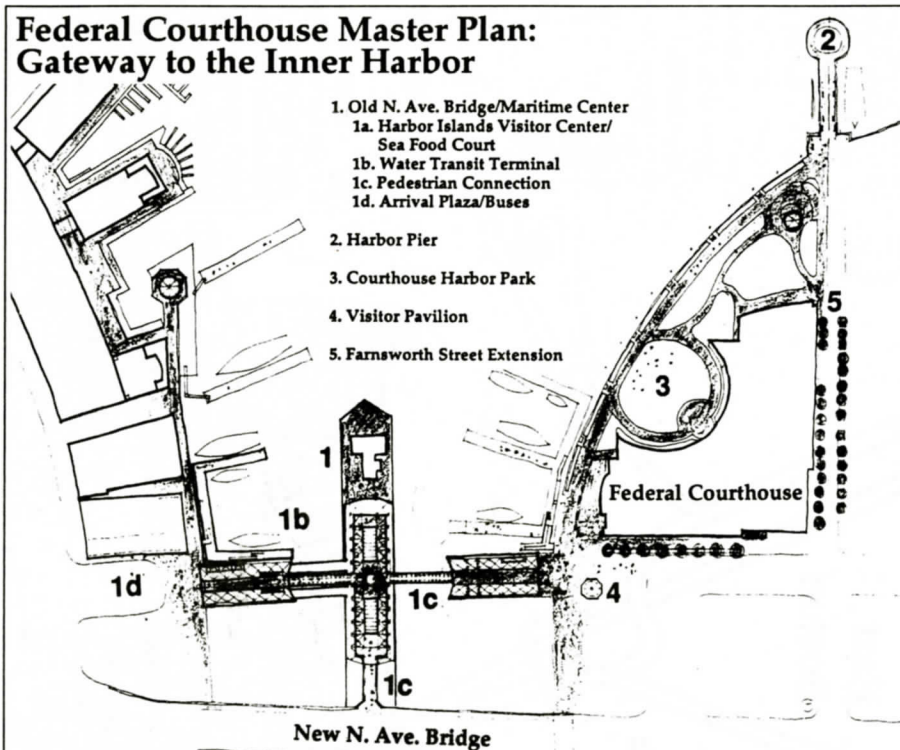
THE BOSTON INFORMER

No. 15

The newsletter for people who care about Boston

September-October 1994

Federal Courthouse Master Plan: Gateway to the Inner Harbor



A new master plan for the Fan Pier/Fort Point Channel area near the new Courthouse site has been issued by the Steering Committee of the Federal Courthouse Special Task Force. The plan proposes fixing the old Northern Avenue Bridge in the open position as a pedestrian connection from downtown to the Fan Pier and as a maritime center for harbor ferries and tour boats. The plan also includes a visitor center and restaurant. On the Fan Pier with the Federal Courthouse would be a waterfront park, walkway along the harbor edge and a large (up to 400 feet long) harbor pier jutting into the harbor for larger ships. A contract for \$154 million has been awarded to build the new Courthouse (estimated total cost is \$219 million) which is expected to open in early 1998.

Source: Federal Courthouse Master Plan

Central Artery/Tunnel Issues to Watch

Want to (try to) keep tabs on some hot Central Artery/Tunnel issues? Here are a few items to watch that have not been resolved publicly:

- Design, timing and cost of the **tunnel under the Fort Point Channel**.
Call Peter Zuk, 951-6071.
- Will **Spaulding Rehabilitation Center** at North Station be taken?
Call Sec. James Kerasiotes, 973-7000.
- What is the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) position on the **proposed cable-stayed bridge over the Charles River**? Will FHWA approve the cable-stayed design or require a redesign?
Call Donald Hammer at 494-2416.
- What is the status of the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on **Oversight of Government Management's** review of the project's cost overruns and delays?
Call Sen. William Cohen (R-Maine) at (202) 224-2523.
- **Major construction in Dewey Square** is supposed to start soon. Why did the CA/T project say recently that major street disruption is two years away?
Call Connie Kastalnik at 951-6120.

City Hall Plaza ideas competition, sponsored by the City of Boston, began on October 17. The goal is to develop ideas for revitalizing City Hall Plaza. While physical change may be an outcome, the thrust of Mayor Menino's program is to develop realistic programs, events, public-private partnerships, and other ideas from a broad group of citizens and professionals with ideas.

The Boston Parks Department and the Boston Society of Architects hosted three seminars—"Promises," "Programs" and "Designs"—in City Council Chambers that drew over 400 citizens. Thoughts included making the brick plaza a "magical space" and returning government to the people with government activities and public events. The Plaza "must be infused with new programs and designs to serve...Boston's increasingly diverse communities," said Mayor Menino.

Unlike most "design competitions," the City Hall Plaza ideas competition is not stressing capital-intensive physical solutions and will accept all ideas for programs, events, and designs. Competition prize awards were donated by the Building Owners and Managers Association. For more information on the competition call Boston Parks and Recreation at 635-3326.

A **'Megaplex,'** a domed stadium combined with a convention center, coveted by the legislature, won't work, says the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA). Its recent study concluded that the needs of conventioners and sports fans differ, infrastructure needs vary, and there would be major added costs combining the two facilities.

The BRA study concluded that the dual-use facility ruled out all but the South Bay (Expressway) site, which is not desirable for convention use.

The BRA then looked at 12 sites, screening them for site, access, and location criteria. The 12 initial sites were: South Bay, C Street, Northern Avenue, Back Bay, Mass. Ave at Melnea Cass Blvd., Conrail Beacon Yards, Kenmore/MassPike, Boston Sand & Gravel, North Station, Boston State Hospital, Suffolk Downs and Neponset Drive-In. Criteria for the site included the need for 31 acres; adjacency to highway and rapid transit; being within walking distance of hotels, shopping, and convenience to the airport.

The BRA study concluded that C Street, south of Summer Street in South Boston, was the best location. Northern Avenue is an alternative. For football, the study states that South Bay is the only Boston site with high-capacity rapid transit service and highway access big enough.

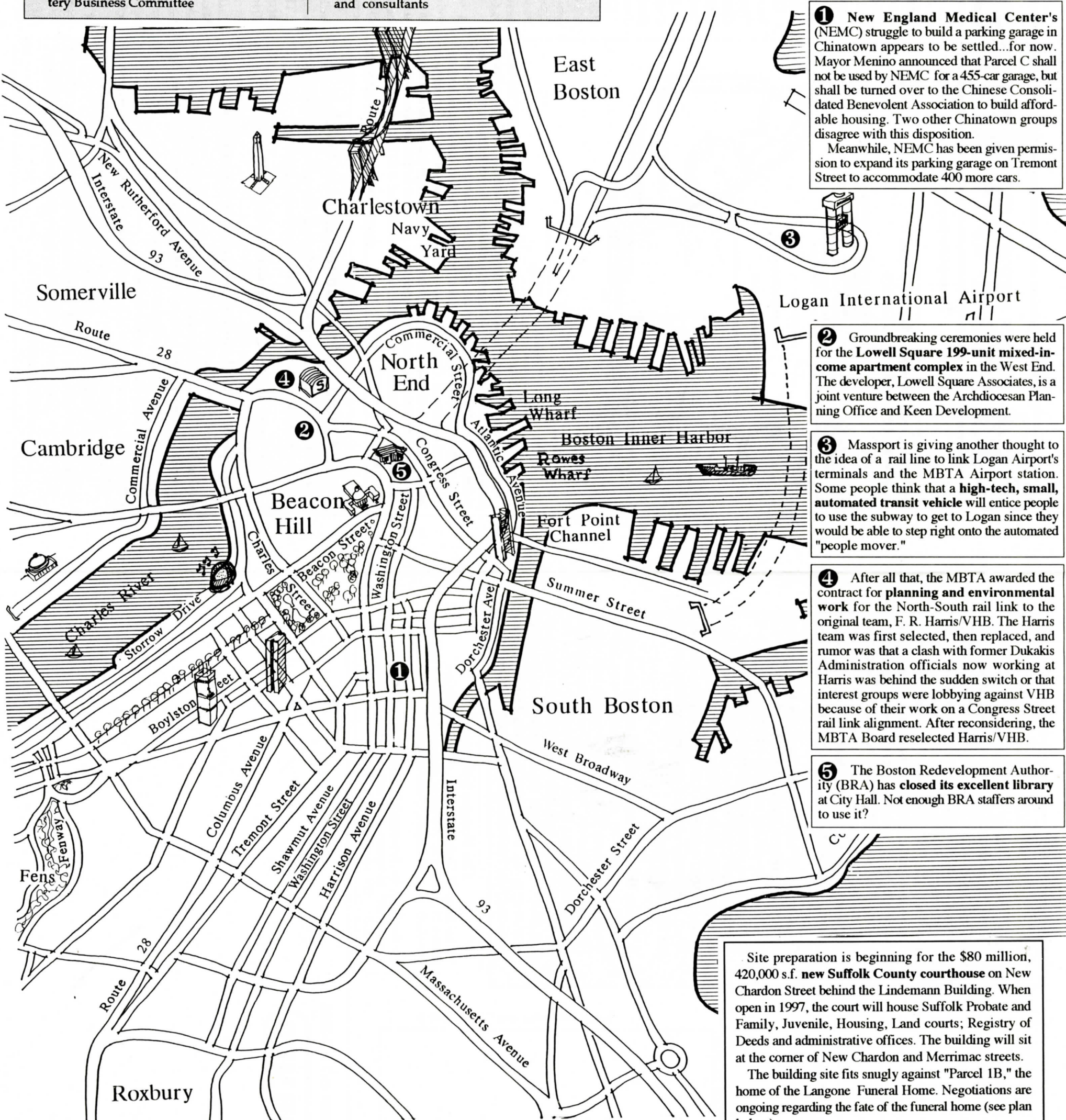
People Movers

James Gillooly, new Deputy Commissioner of the Boston Transportation Department and Director of Boston's Central Artery office
Lisa Chapnick, from head of Boston's Inspectional Services Department to private sector
John Eade, architect, to head of Boston's Inspectional Services Department
Robert Ruzzo, from senior counsel, CA/T project, to Deputy Secretary of EOTC for Environmental Policy
Michael Galvin to Chief of Basic Services, City of Boston
Stan Durlacher, half-time consultant to the Artery Business Committee

Don Gillis, former EDIC head, to chief of economic development for Fall River
Mark Robinson, resigning as Mass. Secretary of Administration and Finance to go to Bingham, Dana, and Gould, attorneys,
Jody Young, City of Newton, to chair of the Joint Regional Transportation Committee of the Boston MPO
Sue Clippinger, former head of Ground Transportation at Logan, to director of Cambridge Traffic Department
Dave Nelson from MBTA Planning to K. K. O'Neill Associates, transportation planners and consultants

Required Reading

- **Accessing the Future**, the Intermodal Transportation Plan for the Commonwealth (draft). Executive Office of Transportation and Construction, 110 pages, softcover. Call 973-7313 for a copy. Comments on the draft plan are due Nov. 28.
- **Federal Courthouse Area Master Plan**, prepared by David Dixon/Goody Clancy Associates for the Steering Committee for the Federal Courthouse Special Task Force, 22 pages, softcover. Call Ed Sidman, 330-1400.
- **Boston Redevelopment Authority Comprehensive Planning study of Convention Center Sites**, 11 pages, softcover. Call the Boston Redevelopment Authority, 722-4300.



1 New England Medical Center's (NEMC) struggle to build a parking garage in Chinatown appears to be settled...for now. Mayor Menino announced that Parcel C shall not be used by NEMC for a 455-car garage, but shall be turned over to the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association to build affordable housing. Two other Chinatown groups disagree with this disposition. Meanwhile, NEMC has been given permission to expand its parking garage on Tremont Street to accommodate 400 more cars.

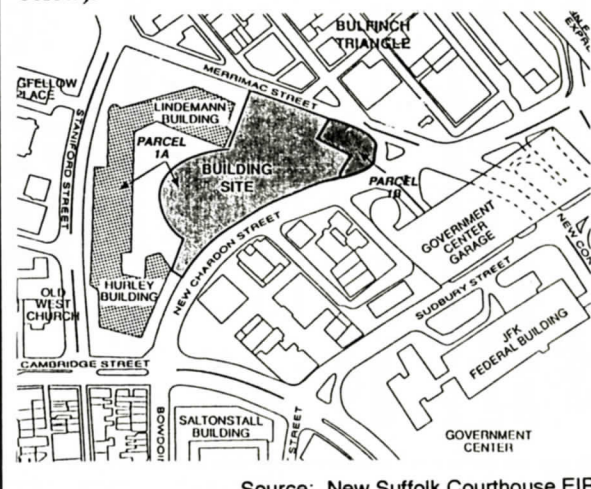
2 Groundbreaking ceremonies were held for the **Lowell Square 199-unit mixed-income apartment complex** in the West End. The developer, Lowell Square Associates, is a joint venture between the Archdiocesan Planning Office and Keen Development.

3 Massport is giving another thought to the idea of a rail line to link Logan Airport's terminals and the MBTA Airport station. Some people think that a **high-tech, small, automated transit vehicle** will entice people to use the subway to get to Logan since they would be able to step right onto the automated "people mover."

4 After all that, the MBTA awarded the contract for **planning and environmental work** for the North-South rail link to the original team, F. R. Harris/VHB. The Harris team was first selected, then replaced, and rumor was that a clash with former Dukakis Administration officials now working at Harris was behind the sudden switch or that interest groups were lobbying against VHB because of their work on a Congress Street rail link alignment. After reconsidering, the MBTA Board reselected Harris/VHB.

5 The Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) has **closed its excellent library** at City Hall. Not enough BRA staffers around to use it?

Site preparation is beginning for the \$80 million, 420,000 s.f. **new Suffolk County courthouse** on New Chardon Street behind the Lindemann Building. When open in 1997, the court will house Suffolk Probate and Family, Juvenile, Housing, Land courts; Registry of Deeds and administrative offices. The building will sit at the corner of New Chardon and Merrimac streets. The building site fits snugly against "Parcel 1B," the home of the Langone Funeral Home. Negotiations are ongoing regarding the fate of the funeral home (see plan below).



Source: New Suffolk Courthouse EIR

The Beacon Companies, owners of Rows Wharf, have bought the **Russia Wharf complex** adjacent to the Central Artery and next to upcoming major construction at Congress Street and Atlantic Avenue. Central Artery/Tunnel project mainline contract C17 and MBTA South Boston Piers Transitway are scheduled to begin construction in two to four years. The transitway trolley bus tunnel will go under part of Russia Wharf enroute to the Fort Point Channel, Federal Courthouse and World Trade Center.

The site will be well situated on the new Harborwalk extension and will make an easy pedestrian connection along the water to Rows Wharf and the water shuttle after Vent Building 3 is built next door. Speculation is that a tower or a Rows Wharf-type development will replace the existing seven-story office complex after the depressed Artery is in place (2004?).

The Central Artery/Tunnel (CA/T) project has **revised its public participation process** for neighborhoods directly affected by the project. The new process attempts to give an outline of design/construction activities that will be happening in an area and then provide opportunities for dialogue, input and updated information. The former public participation process was constantly criticized for either being reactive or non-existent.

Spurred by the Central Artery Environmental Oversight Committee, the CA/T project drafted a document that was critiqued by neighborhood representatives and others. It was then revised and is available from Anne Fanton at the Oversight Committee, 451-2770. The main activities of the new process are Area Open House Forums, Task-Specific Focus Groups, Bimonthly newsletter, Abutter meetings, and related activities.

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Cost Control

You were asking...

Q. How come so many old buildings, such as the Naked i Theater and the old Greyhound terminal, are being razed and replaced with parking lots? I thought there was a parking freeze in downtown Boston. Who is approving these lots?

A. The Boston Air Pollution Control Commission (APCC) reviews applications to create public parking and grants permission based on several criteria, including whether there is already parking and transit in the area. The number of downtown parking spaces is fixed at 35,503, and new spaces are subtracted from the "bank" of spaces administered by the APCC. There are about 500 spaces in the bank.

Q. Does the \$7.7 billion estimate for the Central Artery/Tunnel project include funding to maintain the new parks, run the MBTA 'mitigation' services, and operate the Artery and Tunnel?

A. No. Estimates for park maintenance are \$8 million to \$10 million annually; for the MBTA, \$40 million; and \$150 million to \$200 million for the Artery and Tunnel themselves. Operating and maintenance expenses are typically not federally funded.

Q. Is the new Worcester commuter rail service successful?

A. Yes! (?) The majority of the 340 people who live in Worcester and work in Boston are riding the train daily. However, indications are that these 250 or so passengers are not new transit riders, but people who switched from the Peter Pan bus to the train (bus fare is \$7.95 one way; train fare, \$4.75). In other words, the new service seems only to be shifting people from bus to rail and not pulling people from cars. Peter Pan will drop four Worcester-Boston runs.

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